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Wandering Wheels Newsletter

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12-1-2014

### Wandering Wheels Newsletter, December 2014

Wandering Wheels

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## FIVE DECADES AND COUNTING!

This year, 2014, marks "FIFTY YEARS" of Wandering Wheels' ministry! Over the years multiple thousands have been encouraged in their spiritual pilgrimages. Over three thousand have ridden bikes coast to coast. Thousands have been led on overseas and shorter U.S. bike trips. The Possum bus "mobile retreat ministry" was experienced by hundreds. The Kitchen-Retreat facility, like our other outreaches, has impacted hundreds.

We have nothing but GRATITUDE for the 50 YEARS of the unbelievable, protective umbrella we have felt! ("Thank You, God!")



Wheels' Office Staff - Sue, Coach, Janech and Dana

## "BITS AND PIECES" FROM OTHERS

"Turning point in my life." (Jill) "Thank you for all you did for me and thousands of others." (Ted) "WW, such a big part of my memories." (David) "I remember and wish I could do it again." (Jane) "A victory shared has twice the memories." (Don) "Changed my life forever." (Nancy) "Thanks for memories and more to come." (Polly) "You haven't become rich but have enriched so many others." (Bob) "Keep this unusual ministry going." (Joyce) "If I had more money and a wife who did not like living by herself, there would have been more and more memories." (Frank) "I've found nothing to compare with your guiding light." (Andy) "No telling where I'd be without that grace stop on my journey." (Amanda) "You underestimate how many lives you have positively influenced." (Ted) "Those were the days, my friend. We thought they'd never end." (Bill) "One of the highlights of my life." (Gloria) "Grateful to you and Janech for getting me started and inspired to pursue the lifestyle and service to others." (Don) "WW was mighty patient with

my slow pace." (Bill) "WW one of my life's treasures." (Bill) "One of the most memorable events of my life." (Richard) "Thanks for newsletters. I read every one." (Jeff) "I have had a lot of ups and downs since Wheels—the program taught me the grace, patience and faithfulness to handle them all." (Dave)



"Sunset"

## FLORIDA 2014



Cocoa Beach, home base for January bike trips.

Our well established "Cocoa Beach to Key West" January-February bike runs were replaced with two round trips, Cocoa Beach-to-Juno Beach-to-Cocoa Beach routes. It's about the same distance as Cocoa to Key West with a lot less hassle going through Miami and the long drive back from the Keys to Cocoa. We missed seeing some of our old friends south of Juno Beach. The "Snow Birds" who operate the camp grounds are very welcoming. They seem to celebrate their job which allows them "a place in the sun" they otherwise couldn't afford. We've seen them come and go.



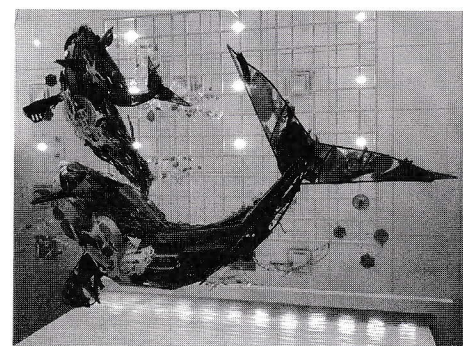
Talk about potholes!

"What day is it?" asked Pooh.  
"It's today!" squeaked Piglet.  
"My favorite!" said Pooh.



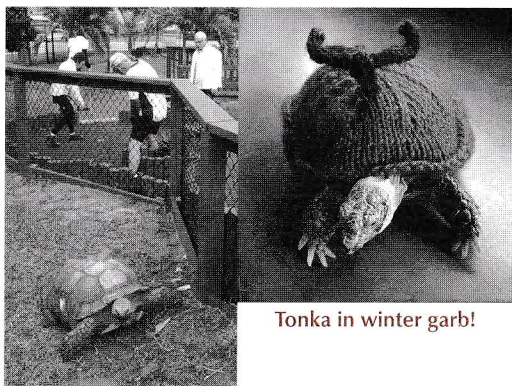
Huffman brothers (Gary, Joe, Berry, and Zane) with Coach  
Many years of GRATITUDE!

Stuart United Methodist Church provides shelter.



Sculpture from beach trash!





Tonka in winter garb!

Tonka all grown up!

## FAT, FAT, FAT TIRE BIKE!

That's right, this "thing" that looks like "The Hulk" has 4-inch tires and is at home in snow, sand, gravel, plowed fields, you name it! I ride it on a one-mile dirt trail, a real pleasure! Wheels was the first to ride the traditional mountain bike coast to coast back in 1984. However, I don't think there is a 4-inch "Fat Tire Coast-to-Coast" ride in our future!



"The Hulk", great off road!

## TRAILBLAZER RIDE

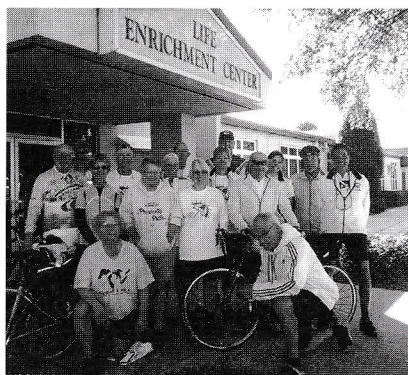
The Trailblazer Ride is fast becoming a permanent fixture. It's amazing how fast the kids grow over the course of one year! It used to be we measured their growth by marking a place on the wall year to year regarding their growth. We now measure their growth by the change in bike size year to year! The downside of the kids getting older is that it's not quite so cool, as they enter their teens, to hang out with the family!



They grow up so fast!



"Team Ragan"



Florida Team

## SHANGHAI, CHINA

Lynn Kueppers, a Wheels' "groupie", continues to bring people to us. Recently, she bused a group of students visiting America from Shanghai, China, to Wheels for a weekend bike retreat.

Interesting observations made by the students:  
\*\* Can we ride slower? I want to enjoy the scenery!

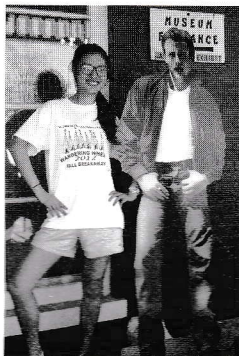
\*\* Impressed with newly plowed fields.

\*\* See stars, no smog!

\*\* So many American Flags!

\*\* Many tears when leaving.

\*\* They loved the "s'mores" -- two cookies, some chocolate and a sugar ball" (marshmallow)!



Chinese gal flirting with James Dean!



Chinese Team



S'mores; called marshmallows "sugar balls"!

## KITCHEN-RETREAT HOUSE (Part 1)

It never ceases to amaze me, the amount of use our Kitchen-Retreat facility generates. I walked a mom through the "Kitchen" today. She had used it years ago. Her daughter's 16th birthday is coming up, so what better place for her party! As the mom browsed, she kept commenting, "Oh, I remember this and that. I fell off the bench while sleeping!", etc. Good stuff!



Wheels' "Kitchen"

I rehearsed with her the stories behind the pictures on the "Kitchen" walls and the sacred meaning of each. She nodded her head and said, "That's a good part of the reason I want my daughter's 16th birthday party in the 'Kitchen'!"



Wheels' "Kitchen" interior

The building has a way of bathing the visiting groups in a "warm, sacred sort of way"!

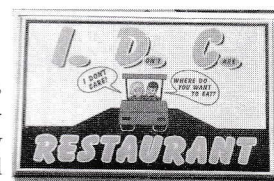
"Overnight" gang, "Kitchen"



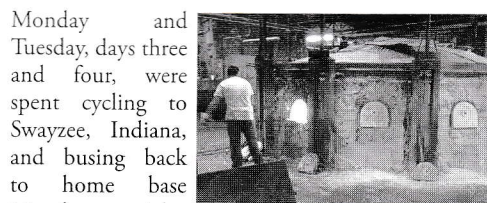
## 30th FALL BREAKAWAY

The 2014 Fall Breakaway stayed close to home. The routing was designed to bring the team back to the Wheels' "Kitchen" each night. Every day's ride included a special place to visit, a "scavenger hunt" in spirit.

Day one, a nice 45-mile round trip, the turnaround being Pennville, Indiana. Pennville has a great little restaurant called the "I.D.C."--stands for "I Don't Care"! Story goes, two men were looking for a lunch stop and one asked the other, "Where do you want to eat?" The friend remarked, "I don't care!", and thus the name of the restaurant. Great pies!



Sunday, day two, we found an old-fashioned country church tucked away on the "Back Forty"! Great congregation! They provided lunch and warm fellowship.



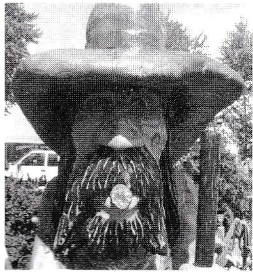
Glass burners.

Monday and Tuesday, days three and four, were spent cycling to Swayzee, Indiana, and busing back to home base Monday night, and then Tuesday, busing to Kokomo's Opalescent Glass Factory and cycling back to Upland. On our return to Upland we bumped into a chain saw artist ("serendipity") with a major display of wood sculptures. We closed out the day visiting Chip and Janice Gosnell near Fairmount, Indiana. Chip has made an amazing recovery! Hats off to Janice's nursing skills and Chip's grit and tenacity!





Glass products.



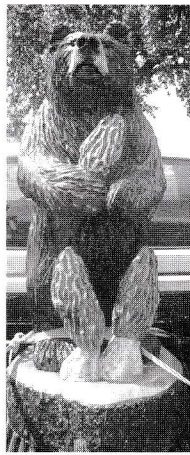
Wood carver's "mug" shot!!



Bear ready for delivery!



Pat on carved wood bench.



Wood carved bear.



Looks real! Gas pump carved out of wood!

Wednesday, day five, bad rain--we hit a Muncie movie! Day six, Thursday, we visited the Eaton, Indiana, Elk Farm. Great visit with a "hand-held" tour of the facilities and super discourse about the animals and the farm operation. Friday, day seven, included two "home visits", beautiful yard displays!



Big buck!



Little buck!

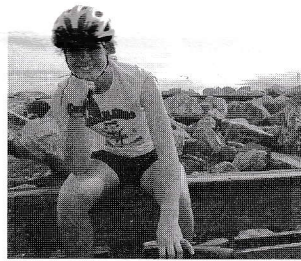


Getting the "lowdown" on elk.

The big plus of the week was the interaction of the riders, just GOOD fellowship!

## ANNIE'S COMMENTS

"I have forty-seven grandparents. The Wandering Wheels cyclists don't care about being cool and they don't obsess over clothes and hair. My Wheels friends encourage me to study hard, do my best, and succeed, while showing me through their stories of painful lessons and crazy adventures that it's also okay to fail. Failure is not necessarily final and is often part of the journey toward success. I've realized that sometimes, it's the failures that build character and make the best stories later on. The ongoing experience of working and cycling with the Wheels group has blessed me with warm memories and unforgettable lessons. Through working with Wandering Wheels, I've already experienced how rewarding and significant the resulting relationships can be."



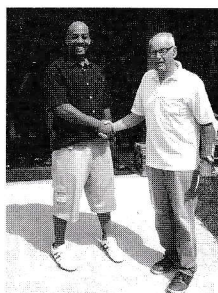
Annie Pugsley, contemplating!

## KITCHEN-RETREAT HOUSE (Part 2)

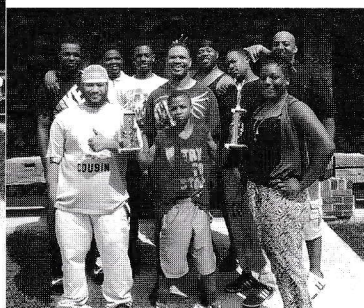
The 2014 Annual Upland Labor Day Parade watchers were entertained by the TRSS Drum Corp out of Dayton, Ohio. The band provided "fantastic rhythm" to the parade route.

A last minute call from the Upland Lions President asked if the Wheels' "Kitchen" might be available for housing the band (they were working on a shoe string). We were not booked for the weekend, so we invited them to come, providing them overnight lodging free of charge.

The band, mostly teenagers, fell head-over-heels in love with the Wheels' facility! They played and played until late at night and the next morning, as well. The adult leaders were deeply pleased for the use of the building, and will probably be back next year!



"Welcome" to Drum Corps leader!



## "NO LONGER WITH US"

It's been a privilege to ride with those who have recently passed...all "tail winds" now!

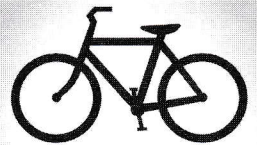
**Bob Rousculp** - rode the 1995 coast to coast and 2012 motor scooter tour, plus several others in between.

**John Potter** - rode the 1994 border to border, 1995 coast to coast, plus six other major tours. Always a joy.

**Lee Kueppers** - 1975 coast to coast; first of the Kueppers to tour with Wheels. His sister Lynn caught the spirit and has ridden on 47 Wandering Wheels' trips!

**Fritz Ilgenfritz** - rode 1996 and 1997 coast to coast.

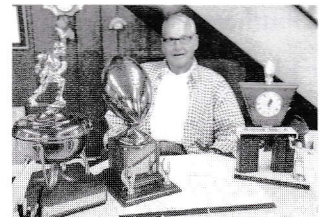
**Woody Grubb** - a former Wheels' staff man; rode the 1971 European trip.



I don't ride a bike to add days to my life. I ride a bike to add life to my days!

## TAYLOR UNIVERSITY HOMECOMING

The 2014 Taylor Homecoming celebrated the class of 1964, 50 years! A special emphasis was placed on the '62,'63, and '64 Taylor football seasons. All three years Taylor won the Football Conference Championship when "yours truly" was at the helm. Many of the players have since ridden coast to coast with us.



Great years, teams and players!

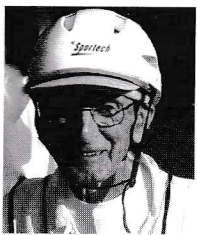
## LOOKING AHEAD... "16-DAY COAST TO COAST"

We're calling IT a "Bike/Bus" ride! The idea is to retrace the Oceanside, California, to Brunswick, Georgia, route, cycling the "pretty" and busing the "boring"! So, for 16 days between March 31 and April 16 (2015), the riders can ride up to 50 miles a day or less, and bus the hundred or so miles the remaining part of the day. The "Bike/Bus" ride has the makings for a great trip--all motel lodging and "eating out"!!

## ED SLAYBAUGH TURNS 100 DECEMBER 24, 2014!

Back when "80" was considered OLD, Ed started riding with Wandering Wheels. Actually, Ed's first trip with Wheels was





Ed Slaybaugh - "100"  
December 24, 2014!!

the 1976 summer coast to coast at age 61. However, in 1995 after he had turned 80, he came back to ride the Breakaway Coast to Coast! Some of his fellow riders doubted the wisdom in his joining the 2,500-mile ride. Three days into the ride, Ed came down with a severe stomach ache. The doubters were saying, "See, I told you so. Better send him home!" Ed called me over to his side, confided in me that he had eaten a three-day-old egg sandwich his wife had made. The sandwich was loaded with mayonnaise and had been baking in the California desert for three days!

I took the silver space blanket off him, walked him to a nearby bush, he "upchucked", got on his bike and rode in the middle of the pack the rest of the way across the U.S.!

Ed has ridden on many of our rides, the last one being the 2009 Fall Breakaway, and has been a high watermark for many of us!

In case you would like to wish Ed a "Happy 100th Birthday", his mailing address is 4170 Wintergreen Blvd., Columbus, OH, 43230. His e-mail is: emslaybaugh@mailbug.com (His e-mail does not receive pictures.)

## 2015 TRIP SCHEDULE

### FLORIDA TRIP #1

Cocoa Beach to Juno  
Return to Cocoa Beach

JAN 10 - JAN 19

### FLORIDA TRIP #2

Cocoa Beach to Juno  
Return to Cocoa Beach

JAN 24 - FEB 02

### 16-DAY COAST TO COAST

Bike & Bus Wheels' Traditional Southern Route from  
Southern CA to Brunswick, GA

MAR 31 - APR 16

### TRAILBLAZER

Gaston, IN to Losantville, IN

JUL 18 - JUL 19

### 31st FALL BREAKAWAY

Biking and Fellowship - Center  
out of Wandering Wheels

SEP 11 - SEP 18

## WHEELS' DORM

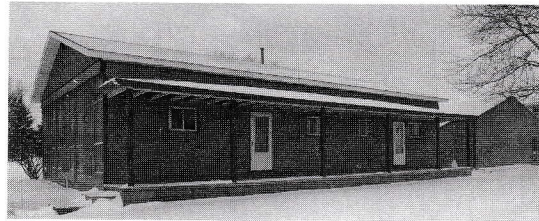
As I write this 2014 newsletter, a little update on some of the "doings" around Wheels.

The wonderful Wheels' "boys' dorm" has had a colorful history. We built it in 1972, 42 years ago, out of three government modular units (trailers). The units were assembled by Wheels' staff guys and immediately filled by 15 of them. All the ups and downs of 15 college-age guys banging around in one building made for a dynamic environment!

The staff men were drivers of one of four Possum buses or were helping direct one of many bike tours. Gradually, the bus program was terminated and the many yearly bike trips cut back. All of a sudden we were "empty nesters"!

The dorm has been put to good use over the years. A mom and five daughters were housed for two years. One of the Taylor football coaches and his wife were housed for a few years. Other families have used it in emergency situations, while currently, three more football coaches are living there.

A new page is being added to the dorm saga. There's a good chance the dorm and bus barn will be given over to a young man and his family. Their dream is to work with young men, training them in special trades. The bus barn will be ideal as a laboratory for developing their trade skills. The students will be housed on the property. He has a vision!



Wheels' dorm and garage.



Our commitment to the cycling part of Wheels will continue to enter new ground in ministering to others via the BIKE!

As always, we couldn't do it without you!

*Bob & Staff*

50 Years



P.O. Box 207 • Upland, Indiana 46989

Wandering Wheels - Wheels' Newsletter